

The Ballarat Naturalist

OCTOBER 2011



PYRETE RANGE EXCURSION SATURDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2011

Thirteen members travelled to the Pyrete Range area in 5 cars with one group departing from the usual location and all meeting at Merrimu Reservoir which was to be the morning tea break. However, very strong winds encouraged a move to the next location which was in the bush and more sheltered. There was only one stop for the day and this was in an



Rosy Baeckea taken at the Victorian Nature Photographers camp at Stuart Mill

area on the south side of Hobbs Road. While enjoying morning tea in this considerably more sheltered location there were a number of plants to be seen including Varnish, Wirilda, Thin leaf and Spike wattles, *Acacia verniciflua*, *provincialis*, *aculeatissima* and *oxycedrus* respectively; although later there was some conjecture as to whether it was Wirilda as it is early for this to be flowering. There was also pink and white *Epacris*

impressa, *hardenbergia violacea* making a nice purple display, *Tetratheca ciliata*, and a *Lomandra* species. Egg and bacon colours were represented by Bushy parrot pea, *Dillwynia ramosissima*.

The morning walk was initially along a track to the east before following a management road into the range area. The aim was to find *Rosy beckeia*, *Beckeia ramosissima* and eventually a plant with one flower was reached. We were informed there were better specimens further along the track but lunch beckoned. Coincidentally, some members went the next week with a different club to the Wax Gardens near St Arnaud and were rewarded with a sea of *Rosy beckeia*.

Along the way it was observed that the grass trees were severely affected by phytophthora fungus but there were plenty of other flowering plants to distract and hold our interest. An interesting combination was a wattle with a *hardenbergia* spiralling up so the stem could hardly be noticed and it looked like the wattle had both yellow and purple flowers. Other



Rosy Baeckea taken at the Victorian Nature Photographers camp at Stuart Mill

flowers noted included Sundew, *Drosera* sp., *Dianella admixta*, *Hakea decurrens*, *Correa reflexa*, *Hibertia prostrata*, *Banksia marginata*, *Leucopogon virgatus*, *Drosera peltata*, *Lomandra filiformis*, *Platylobium formosum*, *Tetratheca ciliata*, *Dampiera stricta*, *Pterostylis melagramma*, and *Allocasuarina*

littoralis, Trees in the area were most likely Brown stringybark, Red stringybark and Broadleaf peppermint, and Long leaf box. Other observations on the way were evidence of wombats and there was a Grey shrike thrush calling but few birds, most likely due to the wind.

After lunch a track directly away from the road at the parking location was taken though an area that was less affected by phytophthora although there was still some evidence. It was explained that this was an undulating path and this was certainly true. Towards the end of the walk

there was a steep descent and some members took advantage of the warning and declined to descend. Those who proceeded were rewarded with more lush vegetation and different trees including Narrow leaf peppermint and most likely manna gums but could have been candlebarks there being no obvious juvenile leaves to differentiate. Paul observed that another way to tell the difference was that candlebarks had straight grain whereas that of manna gum spiralled but cutting to observe this is a rather drastic diagnostic technique. Being closer to the water course the vegetation in the lower area included maidenhair fern, clematis, forest wire grass, and the weed black thistle. When eventually reached, it was noted that the stream was quite brown stained. The return walk provided glimpses of Mt Macedon.

Additional species observed on this walk were *Acacia verticiliata*, *Acacia melanoxylon*, dodder laurel, variable cranes bill (pelargonium), spiny *lomandra*, *Acacia dealbata* and blue caledenia.

Wattles were a feature of the day, yellow adorning the countryside in transit and a total of ten flowering examples being seen on the walks. In addition to those already mentioned there were goldust, ploughshare, hedge, golden, hop and prickly moses. *Acacia acinacea*, *gunnii*, *paradoxa*, *pycnantha*, *stricta* and *verticillata* respectively.

The area showed evidence of being baldly treated with the remains of a considerable number of emptied pot plants and other discarded material plus weed species but it still provided a rewarding days outing.

John had previously taken a landcare group on a similar excursion and had compiled a flora species list which was most helpful. Thanks to John for planning and leading the excursion and for providing a plant list to help with this report.

Peter Dalman (Photos and report)

Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture

Kevin Tolhurst

Bushfires and Biodiversity.

November 4 at 8pm

Kevin is well known through his research on bushfires with Melbourne University (Creswick) and the Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre. He has appeared on TV, giving expert evidence and opinion in the Royal Commission on 2009 bushfires and some years ago took us to see his trial burn plots in the Wombat Forest.

GISBOURNE EXCURSION

Val Hocking sent these photos of the enjoyable excursion around Gisbourne.



Vividly coloured Hardenbergia entwining a wattle bush,



John and Elaine standing by a Varnish wattle beside the roadside



Find the moth!

It was a perfect triangle shape, looking like a leaf. Underneath it was paler.

CLUB MEETING - SEPTEMBER

At the September meeting we enjoyed a talk by Inka Vertheim, a Post-Graduate Student at University of Ballarat, on the *Movement of Brolgas in SW Victoria*. Inka is conducting a three year research project into the movement and spatial requirements of brolgas, and the influence of man-made structures, for example, Windfarms, on the brolgas in this area.

Inka showed, by detailed plotting maps, where brolgas bred and where they moved to after breeding. She explained her methodology and it was particularly interesting to hear how she caught the brolgas to tag them and what the different tags meant. Radio transmitters were also attached to some brolgas to better measure their movements. Chicks and adults were colour-banded and fitted with satellite transmitters. Two colours identify the bird's broader region (one of four regions) and specific area, and each bird has a specific letter/number code which was displayed on the

map. Satellite transmitters collect locations using GPS technology four times per day and send the data back to the researcher via satellite once a week.

Her research identified key seasonal movement routes between breeding and flocking sites and the size required for habitat, allowing better management and protection of brolga habitats and movement corridors.



Report Nina Netherway

Photographs Carol Hall

Club Camp 2011

The Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat camp this year will be at Halls Gap on the weekend of **Friday 18 – Sunday 20 November**. The Grampians will be colourful with late spring flowers and there are many walks of varying length.

The camp will be based at **Takaru Resort** (formerly Lakeside Caravan Park), Tymna Drive, at the base of the Lake Bellfield dam wall 4km south of Halls Gap. Takaru has a variety of units, cabins, powered sites and camping sites. We will have use of the well-equipped camp kitchen for meals and evening activities. Please book your own accommodation as soon as possible. When booking, remember to say that you are with Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat as there will be a discount which is still to be worked out depending on the numbers attending.

Takaru Resort, PO Box 4, Halls Gap 3381

Website: www.takaru.com.au

FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB OF BALLARAT INCORPORATED
No. A0014919P ABN 13 150 403 135
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING - 2 SEPTEMBER, 2011

- 1 **Opening and Apologies.** The President welcomed 31 members & visitors.
- 2 **Minutes** of previous meeting summarised & tabled in *The Ballarat Naturalist*. That the minutes be accepted: Moved: & Seconded

3 Correspondence

IN:

- Bendigo FNC Whirrakee August 2011 / FNCV News Sept 2011
- Castlemaine Naturalist August 2011
- DSE – Fire Management Planning – plans available for public comment for Murray Goldfields district.
- City of Ballarat – Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment 138 – Ballarat Rural Land Use Strategy – notice of info session 9th August Trench Room 4pm-7pm.
- City of Ballarat – Ballarat West Employment Zone Stakeholder Workshop 9th August 6pm-8pm Ballarat Golf Club.
- Request for copy of *Discovering Ballarat's Bushland* \$13 cheque enclosed; (result of blogsite!)
- Email (via Gmail) from Geelong Environment Council re threat to Anglesea Heathland from possible extended coal mining. Also hard copy.
- DSE – Draft Fire Management Zones– notice of meeting at Epsom 24th Aug.
- Ballarat City Council – Newsletter re Planning for the Ballarat West Growth area.
- Letter & flyers promoting Angair Wildflower Weekend at Anglesea 24-25 September, Memorial Hall, 3 MacMillan St.
- Invitation to Maryborough FNC 60th Anniversary 24 Sept \$35.
- Email(via Gmail)) from Geelong Environment Council re public meeting at Anglesea to discuss proposed Alcoa coal mine extension.
- Bendigo Bank Statement August 2011
- Flyer re group tours from Spirit Travel & Tours
- Notice from Ballarat City Council re Planning Amendment C 143, Geelong Rd, Mt Clear.
- Corangamite CMA re Landcare 25th anniversary and grants available.
- RHSV Gardeners Gazette and multiple flyers.

OUT:

- Supportive letter (email) to Victorian Volcanic Plains Biosphere.

- Supportive letter (email) to VNPA re proposed Alcoa Anglesea coal mine extension.

4 Business Arising from Correspondence: see Correspondence Out.

5 Reports

Treasurer's Report: Opening balance \$5492.18 Income \$114, Expenses \$177.94, Balance \$5428.24. Moved / Seconded

6 General Business

- Change of speaker for Stella Bedggood Lecture in November due to Ron Hately's death.
- Library – committee has reviewed collection in discussion with Elizabeth Thurgood. Discarded books can be taken away by members.
- Another monitoring session is to take place at Mt Warrenheip on Friday 9th September.
- Trust for Nature are holding a walk & talk at Clarkesdale Sanctuary with David Coutts on October 23rd 11-3pm.

7 Show & Tell/Field Reports

- Gavin Cerini reported that a great deal of muddy water was flowing down the Yarrowee – no rain had fallen; on following upstream it was found that the valve from the reservoir was partly open; he rang the EPA and eventually the valve was shut. Also Sept 2 – at home in Eyre St Ballarat 12 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos; at Nerrina wetland 1 Large White Egret, 1 Pacific Heron, 1 White-faced Heron.
- Paul Norquay: early September – Mt Egerton - Tawny Frogmouth 4 consecutive nights sitting on post.
- Claire Dalman – Sept 1-3 – Lakes Buloke, Hindmarsh etc beautifully full, many flowers, 3 snakes, 1 lizard.
- Denis Thurgood – Aug 17 – Beaufort – approx. 50 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos.
- Fran Hanrahan - Aug 17 – Alice Springs – 9 Red-tailed Cockatoos on fence rail.
- Peter Billing – during August – Ballarat - 1 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.
- Pete Collins – Aug 30th - Ballarat – Australian Hobby over railway station.
- Les Hanrahan – Wombat crossing the road Bullarto-Leonards Hill.
- Lorraine Powell - bees in heritage gum in Ballarat Botanic Gardens.
- Excursion Arrangements: Saturday September 2nd - Pyrete Ranges, leader John Gregurke. Meet at Merrimu Reservoir.

9 Syllabus Item: Inka Veltheim: *Movement of Brolgas in SW Victoria.*

10 Supper

CALENDAR 2011

OCTOBER

- Fri 7 Ern Perkins OAM, Castlemaine FNC, *Broken Hill in the wet season*
- Sun 9 *Newstead*, Ern Perkins
- Sun 16 Yarrowee Trail Tree Planting 10am. Details in September newsletter
- Tues 25 Committee meetin

NOVEMBER

- Fri 4 at 8pm **Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture**
 Dr Kevin Tolhurst, Senior Lecturer in Fire Ecology and Management
 Fire and Biodiversity
- Sun 6 *Mt Beckworth*, Fran Hanrahan, Club member

Another Diary Date...

- ➔ **SEANA Spring Camp**, Saturday 29 October – Tuesday 4 November.
 ALTERED LOCATION: Phillip Island. Details available at meeting.

Committee

President.....Ms Elspeth Swan
 Vice-President.....Mr Greg Binns
 Secretary Mrs Carol Hall
 Treasurer Mr Les Hanrahan

Mrs Claire Dalman	Mr John Gregurke.....
Mr Peter Dalman	Mrs Val Hocking
Dr Frances Hanrahan	Ms Nina Netherway (editor)

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 Editor: Nina Netherway,

Website: <http://fieldnatballarat.wordpress.com>

Meetings are held at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts, on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm..

Excursions: Leave from the carpark at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts.

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